1: Rattray E, G-5 (ca. 1920)1932
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Kusase

606 will lose his wife; they can take her from him and return him the cows.'

607 *Privileged Familiarity*: 'A man may play and be familiar with his sister's husband. A man can also be familiar with his grandparents, 603 for when a man has grand-children who drag him about, he blesses the 648 Sky-God.[1] We, Kusase, also "play together" (*deem taba*) with the Mampruse and the Gurense, because these tribes intermarry with us, and we have never sold each other, but the Moshi we never play with, for we used to sell them for food. The Gambaga and Bawku people, however, play with the Moshi, saying when they meet one, "Where do you come from, you worthless thing; I have heard that the Chief of your town is dead?" The Moshi will reply, "You fellow with the filed teeth, get out of my way; be off with you", and he will rush right into a man's compound as if it belonged to him.

'A man's mother's brother's daughter's husband (*daki*) may beat 607 him in fun. A man can swear at his wife's brothers (*ti tu tab*); we curse each other.'

582 *Marriages Prohibited and Allowed*: 'Kusase do not marry Moshi women; they eat fowls, when they ought to eat guinea-fowls.' As long as your own wife is alive, you must not marry your wife's sister's [587] daughter. You may marry your wife's sister while your wife is still alive, but not a *nyere*[2] sister. A son may not marry a father's widow, because a son sacrifices to his father's spirit.[3]

764 *Kusase Funeral Customs*: The Kusase do not bury even a *Yi-dan* (head of a compound) in a room or yard of his compound, but outside in the *saman* farm. The head of a compound is, however, given a separate and new grave (*yaog*); this is round with a circular bottle-neck mouth. The soil is not filled in. The mouth of the grave is covered with a pot and plastered over with earth (see Fig. 88).

Graves are not communal, at most two persons being buried in one grave. The second person so buried may not be,

(*a*) Junior to the first.
(*b*) *Nyere* to him or her.
(*c*) Any wife, save the last surviving.
(*d*) Two children may not be buried in the same grave 'because they would quarrel'.

A male is buried in a goat skin; a female buried naked, save for a

[1] A grandchild may not look into a grandparent's ears or he or she will become deaf.
[2] See p. 8. [3] But see p. 508.

3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
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solve the conflict between these antithetic bonds in favour of her conjugal family.

Tallensi say that a woman is like a stranger or guest (both ideas are contained in the native word *saan*) in her husband's house during the first year or two of marriage. Standing outside the intimate life and vital concerns of the family, she cannot yet be relied upon. Gradually she grows accustomed (*malɔm*) to her conjugal family; and after some years, when she has several children, she becomes so far absorbed into the family that full trust can be reposed in her and she takes a full and self-confident part in family affairs.

It needs little observation to see how apt is this description of the gradual absorption of women into their husbands' families. On a visit to a homestead to which a newly wedded wife has just been added, one can easily observe the 'shyness (*valɔm*)', as the Tallensi call it, of the new wife (*pɔya*) and her husband (*sɛt*) towards each other. This goes farther than formal etiquette. Good manners require that a woman should always show respect to her husband in public. She walks behind him if they have to go anywhere together on a ceremonial occasion. She stoops or kneels whenever she offers him food or drink. But this behaviour is customary for a woman with all adult males other than her own children. It is a sign of the general attitude of respect due from women to men in a society so dominated in public social relations by the patriarchal principle. The 'shyness' of a newly married wife comes out in other ways. She tries to keep out of her husband's way as much as possible during the day, busying herself zealously with the household tasks given to her by her mother-in-law. She is submissive to all his requests. She speaks to him only when she is spoken to. She takes no initiative in anything.

This attitude is even more marked in her behaviour towards her parents-in-law (*daŋaam*, pl. *daŋaanam*), to whom she is bound to show formal deference at all times, and to her adult brothers-in-law, with whom she must always be circumspect because of the incest barrier which we shall discuss later. It often comes into her private relations with her husband if he is much older than she is. She will flirt and be more companionable with a young husband, in private, natives say; for he is probably like herself a *tarɔm*, junior, under authority, and connubial joys mean so much to him that he comes down to an equal footing with his wife for their sake.

The Relationships of a Wife with her Relatives-in-law

A woman does not avoid any of her relatives-in-law or her husband, nor are her relations with them regulated by strict prescription. She maintains a general attitude of deference, modesty, and complaisance towards them. A well-behaved young wife is industrious and obedient in helping her mother-in-law with her domestic work, and she will be self-effacing and deferential towards her father-in-law, her husband,

3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
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606 and his adult brothers. The only relaxation of this attitude occurs with her sisters-in-law (*pɔɣakie*, pl. *pɔɣakies*). With them, often her equals
607 in years and her companions in work, she can laugh and play and joke. Like herself, they are already, or are fated to be, married out of their natal families to 'strangers'. This is a bond of fellowship superadded to that of sex and often age. But they also belong to the opposite camp. Identifying themselves with their brothers and their lineage, they sometimes speak of her as 'our wife (*ti pɔɣa*)', and she sometimes refers to them as 'my husbands (*n-sɛrib*)'. They will take the side of their brother if she comes into conflict with her husband or deserts him. Her relationship with them is typical of the ambivalence that underlies the joking relationship among the Tallensi.

601 In the first year or so of marriage a woman tries to avoid having to
576 address her male in-laws and her husband directly in public. If they address her it will be in a somewhat formal and courteous way, her husband and his brothers using her clan name, her father-in-law addressing her as 'mother (*ma*)'. She is most at home—but in a very deferential manner—with her mother-in-law, in whose rooms and under whose care she lives, whose domestic duties she largely takes over, and who also addresses her as 'mother (*ma*)'. To any member of the family she speaks of her father-in-law as 'father (*ba*)' and of her mother-in-law as 'mother (*ma*)', and she addresses the latter by this term. Outside the family a woman speaks of her husband as 'my husband (*n-sɛt*)'; of his brothers as 'my older' or 'my younger husband (*n-sɛt-bier*, or *n-sɛt-pit*)'; and of his parents as 'my father (mother)-in-law (*n-daŋaamdoog*, masc.—*n daŋaampɔk*, fem.)'. Her husband speaks of her as 'my wife (*mpɔɣa*)'; his brothers as 'my older or younger brother's wife (*m-bier* or *m-pit pɔɣa*)', or in some situations as 'our (i.e. the lineage's) wife'; her parents-in-law as *sampɔɣa*.

606 The status of a woman in her conjugal family is most sharply focused in her relations with her parents-in-law. For it is they who form the axis around which the family revolves. Its unity, its independence, the management of its material affairs, and the maintenance of its well-being all reside in them. Though the general impression one receives of a woman's relationship with her parents-in-law is one of affability and ease, it is potentially anomalous, particularly in the early years. As their son's wife she is in the position of a daughter to them. She will give valuable and indispensable service in the economy of the household. She will produce children to augment the family and the lineage. But, as she herself knows and feels, she is an intruder. She is made to feel this in the early years of marriage even if, as so often happens, she belongs to an adjacent clan, and was personally well known to her conjugal family before marriage. For marriage creates entirely new associations between individuals and families. If she was married by elopement she knows that she is on trial, perhaps the object of a

3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
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602 parents-in-law, particularly in the early years while he is not quite sure of his wife. If his father-in-law sends for him to help with the hoeing, 606 or with house building, or his mother-in-law requests him to help thatch her rooms, he must respond with alacrity and bring as large a party of his clansmen to assist him as he can manage. In this way a man shows honour to, ingratiates himself with (*giem*), his affines; for these services are not enforceable obligations, and usually cease to be asked for after the marriage has become stabilized. They bear no relation to the bride-price, and are lavishly recompensed. A visiting work-party brought by a son-in-law expects generous hospitality, and the father-in-law, if he is a reputable man, would feel that he had lost dignity if he did not feed and entertain the work-party well. But though these services cannot be enforced, no man would risk offending his parents-in-law by refusing them. These material demonstrations of respect, gratitude, and goodwill are essential for the smooth working of a relationship artificially established by a jural compact. Parents-in-law praise and like an obliging son-in-law, even if he has not paid the bride-price, the natives say.

602 This is one side of the affinal relationship. It also has an aspect of 607 friendliness and familiarity, as we have seen, which comes out most conspicuously in a man's relations with his siblings-in-law. A man has a joking relationship with his siblings-in-law similar to that of his wife with his sisters and distant clansmen. It goes so far that a man may sleep with an unmarried sister-in-law (*dakiipɔk*) who is visiting his house, and is therefore in that situation identified with his wife. A man's siblings-in-law belong to the familiar and friendly generation of his wife. They are identified with her. But they also belong to the potentially hostile lineage of her father, whose heir a brother-in-law will one day be. In very many ways a man's siblings-in-law are sympathetically drawn to him; but their rights in relation to his wife may pit them against him. The convention of joking serves to reconcile these two potentially discordant elements of their relationship. But when the marriage has lasted many years, and the possibility of a conflict of rights disappears, the element of friendliness in the relationship can assert itself without prejudice to its jural aspect. Thus, conventional teasing usually drops out of the intercourse of siblings-in-law of long standing.

606 The formal distance between affines is further shown in the duties 764 and obligations to which a man is liable on the death of a son-in-law or 431 parent-in-law. On the death of a parent-in-law a man is obliged to attend the mortuary and funeral ceremonies. He should come escorted by a large party of clansmen and their wives, and the mourning party should wear their finest clothes and be led by drummers and musicians. A son-in-law should provide the gravestone for a parent-in-law. He should distribute money freely to the grave-diggers, to the drummers, singers, and musicians, whose raucous noise stimulates the crowd

3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
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voice in the disposal of bride-price payments always lies with the head of the joint family. He has to strike a balance between the different claims that have to be met; but other things being equal he will earmark at least a portion of a daughter's bride-price for her *soog* brother's use in espousing a wife, or if he has a wife, her nearest *sunzɔ* brother. Tallensi say that a self-respecting man should be specially scrupulous in this matter with his proxy children, but that sometimes proxy fathers are not. I have known elders of the inner lineage put pressure on a man to abide by the rule. Thus one of the grouses Sinkawol had against his proxy father Tiezien was that the latter had refused to part with cattle received for Sinkawol's *soog* sister in order to secure a second wife for Sinkawol or his *soog* brother. By contrast, one of the few things in favour of Na'abzɔ was that he allowed his proxy son Siŋ (who was farming on his own) to keep the money received in payment of Siŋ's half-sister's bride-price, against the day when Siŋ would need it himself to pay bride-price. Siŋ, incidentally, prudently handed over the money for safe-keeping to a friend, lest he himself should be tempted to fritter it away in meeting petty needs, or, worse still, lest Na'abzɔ should suddenly demand it for the payment of some debt that had meanwhile become urgent. This convention, in short, represents not a right to a sister's bride-price but an acknowledgement of the social equivalence of siblings.

Conventionalized joking between a man and his wife's siblings (in the widest classificatory sense of all her clan-siblings), and of a woman with her husband's sisters and his more distant clansmen, is another indication of the social equivalence of siblings. We have discussed this before and need only draw attention here to the associated custom by which a man is allowed to sleep with a wife's unmarried sister who comes on a visit. It is very difficult to ascertain how far this custom is actually practised. Men say it was commoner in the old days when girls were not married off, as they often are now, before puberty, but at a somewhat later age. None of the men I knew best claimed to have slept with a sister-in-law; but several said they had 'played' (*deem*)—a euphemism for flirtation ending in stealthy sex relations—with visiting sisters-in-law of one of their near clansmen. At the same time, in joking with a sister-in-law or talking about a sister-in-law men always emphasize this custom, as if it were an unchallengeable right.

Another illustration associated with the joking relationship between siblings-in-law is the terminology used between them. A man's sisters speak of his wife—and sometimes address her, half jokingly—as 'our wife (*ti poŋa*)' and the wife uses the reciprocal term 'husband' (*sɛɛ*) in the same way of them. I once heard a girl of about 9 address her sister-in-law thus. Pretending ignorance, I asked her why she did so. 'Our wife (she is)', came the answer, with a gesture of disdain that amused the wife, 'Have we not given cows for her?'

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